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POISON DART FROGS

Espinosa Poison Frog

Epipedobates espinosai

Epipedobates espinosai is a small, diurnal poison dart frog of 13-20 mm with a copper-brown to dark red back, in some populations black with orange spots. It lives in humid forest in the lowlands and at the foot of the Andes in north-western Ecuador. The species is hardly ever kept, and little is known about its care.

Family: Dendrobatidae Former name: *Dendrobates espinosai; Phyllobates espinosai; Epipedobates darwinwallacei* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**13-20 mm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**8-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Skin toxins in the wild	**Mild**
Skin toxins in captivity	**None** Captive-bred animals. Wild-caught animals can keep their toxins for a long time
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-22 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
Water	**Water dish** depth 1-2 cm
UVB	**Optional** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Tadpoles carried to water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per clutch	**10-30**
Hatching	**9-14 days**
Larval period	**42-70 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Algae/plants and complete diet**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs and carries the tadpoles**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
IUCN	**Data Deficient (DD)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Epipedobates espinosai*, and the species is hardly ever kept.
TEMPERATURE	Keep 22-26 °C during the day with slightly cooler and slightly warmer spots in the enclosure, and 19-22 °C at night. Animals from Mindo and other high-lying places do best at the cool end.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity should be 80-100 %. Spray several times a day or use a rain system, for example three times a day for 20-60 seconds, preferably supplemented with a fogger.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	A shallow water bowl with 1-2 cm of water, for example a low saucer or half a Brazil nut shell, gives the frogs a place to drink and bathe and is a breeding site when the male is to deposit tadpoles.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The light is for the plants: fluorescent tubes or LED bars for about 12 hours a day. The closely related species thrive without UVB, so it is optional.
FEEDING	The frogs are given live, small prey: springtails and fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*), and adults also take the larger *Drosophila hydei* and newly hatched crickets.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*E. espinosai* is diurnal and moves openly between grass and leaf litter. The males of the genus are territorial and call from fixed spots; the brown and the orange-spotted populations have almost identical calls.
NATIVE RANGE	Ecuador.

The full guide with map and updates: herpy.org/pilegiftfroeer/epipedobates-espinosai